

## **Community Board 1, Meeting Minutes**

**November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

### **Board Member Attendees – List Attached**

#### **OPENING: 6:30pm**

- Chairman Joseph Risi greeted attendees, and asked for people to recite the pledge of allegiance. The pledge was recited.
- Mr. Risi then introduced the first item on the agenda, a presentation from the Parks Department regarding playground renovations at Dutch Kills Playground and Comfort Station.

#### **PRESENTATIONS:**

##### **1. Thomas Brown, Landscape Architect, NYC Parks Department – Design Review for Dutch Kills Playground and Comfort Station located at 28<sup>th</sup> Street and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

- Mr. Thomas Brown was joined by Nadia Jarat to review the design plans for the Dutch Kills Playground and Comfort Station. The park (adjacent to PS 112) is the only public park within walking distance for the neighborhood, and as such, the \$4.5 Million renovation is especially critical. The funds for the project were allocated by the city council (Hon. James Van Bramer).
- The playground, sitting area, and existing sports courts on the northern side of the park will be addressed during this renovation.
- Mr. Brown reviewed current site conditions at the park, as well as the planned design. The renovations will include:
  - Installation of new equipment (including accessible equipment) for adults and children, and new fencing. Specific categories of equipment will include adult fitness equipment, new play equipment and a sprinkler play area for children ages 2-5, and new play equipment and a sprinkler play area for children ages 5-12.
  - Improved storm water management, surfaces and entry ways.
  - Repairs to the superficial damage on the retaining wall.
  - Improved/increased lighting, and landscaping/greenspace consisting of resilient trees and shrubs (including canopy trees to provide additional shade). Some unhealthy trees will need to be replaced.
  - New benches/seating areas, and new water bottle filler fountains.
  - Renovating existing sports courts, including the basketball half courts and handball courts.
- Ms. Nadia Jarat reviewed plans for renovating the comfort station, as well as the current building conditions. The renovations will include:
  - New windows/security screens in spaces where windows had been previously bricked up.
  - Improving the building and fixtures (e.g. sinks, toilets) so that the comfort station will be accessible for individuals with disabilities, and enable wheelchair users to maneuver throughout.
  - Improving exterior surfacing/pavers.
  - Updating existing plumbing, heating and electric to be more modern and energy efficient.
  - Installation of a new, accessible water fountain on the exterior.
  - Renovations will also include work to prevent water leaks.
  - Existing roof is in good condition and will remain, but the weather vane will be refurbished.
- The Board and the Chairman questioned the representatives, resulting in the following clarifications:

- Accessible equipment will be installed for both younger (2-5 years old) and older (5-12 years old) children, with a ratio of approximately 1:1 of accessible/ground play and non-accessible features.
- The goal is to begin construction in 2018 (if not delayed by a lengthy procurement process), and complete work the following year.
- The doors of the comfort station will remain open during park hours, which will prevent issues opening the door for individuals with limited use of their hands. Doors will be equipped with signs that include braille writing to notify those who are blind of which restroom is designated male/female. Finally, doors will include levers that are consistent with specifications for accommodating individuals with disabilities.
- Representatives reiterated that the scope of work does include adding lighting to the central portion of the park (a task being conducted in partnership with DOT), and also stated that the lights would be equipped with a sensor that would ensure the lights were turned on and off at the correct times. There are currently lights on the perimeter of the park.
- There will be at least one onsite (domicile) maintenance worker for the park/staffing the comfort station during daytime hours.
- The Parks Department can look into doing park improvements in stages, so that portions of the park remain open during the construction process. Closing the entire park for an extended period is a concern because it is the only park in the local area, and as such, is widely used by children in the neighborhood who would otherwise not have another park to play in during the course of renovations.
- While unhealthy trees are being removed from the center of the park, trees will be planted to take their place along with additional new greenspace. Additionally, Mr. Thomas Brown estimates there will be 2-3 times the number of trees in the park once construction is completed than there are now.
- The Chairman called for questions from the public. Public questioning resulted in the following clarifications:
  - The new slides in the 5-12 play area will be 6 feet tall. Making the slides taller would be challenging due to space constraints, and also pose a problem since many taller slides are not accessible for those with disabilities (though the representatives will look into the matter further).
  - The height of the new swings will be the same as the current swings.
  - The wall seating surrounding a central sprinkler play area will have permeable borders (i.e. space between the seats). However, the space may not be sufficient enough to permit for children to play sports in the area (e.g. full games of soccer).
  - There are no current plans to reconstruct the multipurpose play area, but it is something the Parks Department could consider in the future.
  - Bike racks will be installed near park entry ways.
  - Mr. Brown is unsure of whether bottle filler fountains could be installed on the exterior wall of the comfort station, but two will be installed within the park itself.
  - Benches will be 8 feet long, and will include three arm rests (including a central one), which will hopefully deter individuals from sleeping in the park.
  - A public scope/visioning meeting was held at the adjacent PS 112 to allow for public brainstorming and commentary on the new park design. These ideas were combined with information from a site survey to develop the park design reviewed during the presentation.
- Chairman Risi thanked the Parks Department representatives, and introduced the new Community Coordinator from Borough President Melinda Katz's Office.

**2. Introduction of the new Community Coordinator from Borough President Melinda Katz's Office.**

- Mr. Joe Nocerino (the new Community Coordinator from the Borough President's Office) introduced himself and announced he looked forward to working with Community Board 1 on local issues.
- Mr. Risi thanked Mr. Nocerino, and called for the next presentation on the agenda to begin.

**3. Onel Hidalgo, Team Leader, Field Services, Office of Recovery and Resilience, NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) – An update of Sandy Relief Measures.**

- Mr. Hidalgo introduced himself and indicated that a copy of the presentation was provided to Board Members at their seats.
- Mr. Hidalgo then discussed the Sandy recovery and resiliency efforts underway at the Astoria Houses complex. Hurricane Sandy affected over 750 NYCHA buildings throughout the city, including some at the Astoria Houses. NYCHA negotiated a grant from FEMA to fund recovery efforts. Grant funds must be used to repair damage on site caused by Hurricane Sandy (at Astoria Houses this includes 8 buildings along the East River), and can't be used for other repairs.
- Residents from Astoria Houses have been engaged to discuss the renovations. Mr. Hidalgo estimates the figure at over 150 engagement opportunities for Astoria Houses residents and indicated tenant involvement is a critical element of the project. Representatives will be returning to the Astoria Houses throughout the construction process to speak with residents and collect feedback.
- Scope of work includes:
  - Installation of standby generators on building roofs.
  - Restoration of sidewalks/fencing/pathways where necessary.
  - New rooms (elevated above flood level) to house electrical equipment.
  - Replacement of site lighting and underground conduits.
  - Roof replacement.
  - Restoration of architectural features such as walls, floors and doors (including lobby renovations).
  - Restoration of damaged mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.
  - Installation of flood proofing/barriers for future storms and improvements to prevent leaking.
  - Restoration of playgrounds.
  - Installation of closed circuit television cameras and a new security system.
- Construction is underway and is expected to be completed in 2018. D&B Engineers and Architects is the construction manager. Navillus is the construction contractor for the permanent Sandy repair work at the site.
- Laura Gibson spoke regarding the Section 3 Economic Development program, which includes pre-apprenticeship programs, union apprenticeship training, administrative opportunities, adult education resources, and financial planning resources (work force development). Section 3 staff are also working to ensure contractor compliance with Section 3.
  - Ms. Gibson did note that while this is not a quick process, NYCHA views the program as "a ladder to the middle class".
  - Ms. Gibson acknowledged Mr. Bernard Callegari, who is a local labor union representative, for his outreach efforts.
  - Ms. Gibson also brought fliers to distribute to interested parties.
  - Chairman Joseph Risi asked for information regarding the program be sent to the district office so that it could be included as a resource on the Community Board 1 webpage.

- Chairman Risi called for Board questions and comments. This resulted in the following clarifications:
  - Mr. Hidalgo will look in to what is being done to remediate water damage around bathtubs that were submerged by floodwater during the storm.
  - In response to concerns from multiple Board Members that residents are not hearing back, or hearing back in a timely fashion, when they submit resumes under the Section 3 program, Ms. Gibson indicated that union jobs can be difficult to come by, but that the jobs are more stable than the non-union jobs previously offered. Ms. Gibson reviewed the preference criteria for receiving help under the Section 3 program, and also stated that contractors aren't required by contract to sponsor residents in order for these individuals to receive jobs (though union requirements may hold additional criteria or allowances).
    - Preference criteria for Section 3 are as follows:
      - *1. NYCHA Resident living in a Sandy impacted development (where the recruitment efforts and work are being conducted).*
      - *2. Any NYCHA Resident*
      - *3. Any individual who meets HUD's definition of low income and also lives in a Sandy affected area (in this case, in New York City).*
  - In response to concern that residents are not provided with enough information about Section 3, representatives indicated appreciation for the feedback and reviewed steps they have taken to engage in outreach, including going to tenant meetings.
  - Chairman Risi reiterated a request to have information on Section 3 sent to the Board office.
- The District Manager asked for information regarding the status of water/mold remediation in crawl spaces during the Board questions and comments segment of the presentation. Mr. Hidalgo indicated remediation had already taken place.
- Mr. Risi called for public comments. Public commentary and questioning led to the following clarifications:
  - Mr. Bernard Callegari (who is familiar with the program and is both a member of a local labor union and part of Build Up New York) spoke at the request of NYCHA representatives in support of the Section 3 program and reported that as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 25 Section 3 residents had been placed on Queensbridge jobs (which are separate from the Sandy relief project), 10 of whom live in Queensbridge.
  - Generator maintenance and testing will be contracted out, rather than taken care of by NYCHA.
  - The fuel tanks will likely be on the roof, and this should prevent issues of fuel access to the generators. However, Mr. Hidalgo will look in to the matter further to determine for certain where the fuel tanks for the generators will be located.
- Chairman Risi thanked the NYCHA representatives for their presentation, and called for an update from the Neighborhood Coordination Officers from the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

#### **UPDATE FROM 114<sup>th</sup> PRECINCT NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATION OFFICERS**

- Officer Lewandowski from the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct (NCO for Sector A) announced the NCO program is going well.
- Officer Holly (NCO for Sector B) reminded attendees about the increase in car break-ins, and encouraged the public to not leave items of value within their cars. Officer Holly also advised the public not to mail checks as a result of recent mail-fishing scams, and instead recommended either paying bills online, or going directly to the post office to mail any payments.

- Chairman Risi called for public discussion to commence.

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

- Ms. Antonia Martinez spoke on behalf of NYJTL, a tennis program that often uses the Dutch Kills playground's multipurpose area. Ms. Martinez asked that the multipurpose space be considered for renovations.
  - Chairman Risi asked the Parks/Recreation & Cultural Services Committee Chair, Mr. Richard Khuzami, to respond.
  - Mr. Khuzami encouraged Ms. Martinez to become involved with the capital budget process for FY-2019 to encourage the Board to request money be allocated to renovating the multipurpose area (as there is no current funding for the project, to the Chair's knowledge).
  - Mr. Khuzami also requested Ms. Martinez send information regarding the group and their needs to the District Office.
- Mr. Neil Herdan spoke regarding an Old Astoria memories initiative and also asked for information regarding district boundaries, as well as copies of the agenda and the minutes, be added to the webpage. The District Manager clarified the agenda and minutes are already posted on the webpage, and links to find the other information are included as well.
- Mr. Paul Collins from the Astoria Park Alliance encouraged the public to attend the visioning session on Wednesday 11/16/16 at the Bohemian Hall (from 7pm-9pm) to discuss plans for the \$30 Million allocation (through the NYC Anchor Parks Program) for Astoria Park, and also listed several priority ideas the organization supports. A flier was included in Board Members folders. Mr. Collins also encouraged attendees to join the Astoria Park Alliance at their monthly meetings at Bohemian Beer Hall on the first Tuesday of every month.
- Father Edwin Brady spoke in support of reopening the Astoria Park diving pool.
- Ms. Ashley Tobias spoke regarding her "Be True to You" anti-bullying initiative, and indicated she would like to see it implemented in Astoria. Ms. Tobias brought information regarding the program, and also announced a talent show she is hosting at QED for area children in December.
  - Chairman Risi asked Ms. Tobias to send information regarding her program to the Board Office.
- Mr. Bernard Callegari provided an update to the Board on behalf of Built Up New York, and stated that the organization is looking at ways to force the developers of the Astoria Cove project to follow through with agreed upon stipulations. Mr. Callegari also expressed concern with their accumulation of violations. Mr. Callegari then thanked the Board for all their work on the issue.
- Sumana Harihareswara spoke about concerns with race/religious related intimidation and harassment in the neighborhood (especially following the election), and stated she would be looking for ways to work with local groups and residents to combat the issue.
  - Chairman Risi noted that Astoria is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city.
  - Board Member Dominic Stiller discussed upcoming events related to community unity and combating hate with Ms. Harihareswara.
- Chairman Risi called for a motion to approve the October minutes, followed by a breakout session.

## **BUSINESS**

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

- Chairman Risi called for a motion to approve the October public hearing minutes.

- **Motion made by Edward Babor.**
- **Motion seconded by Elizabeth Erion.**
- **Motion to accept minutes passed unanimously.**
- **Chairman Risi called for a breakout session to enable the Parks Committee to meet and discuss the design for Dutch Kills Playground and Comfort Station.**

**\*\*\* Breakout Session to allow Parks Committee to Meet: 7:47pm \*\*\***

**\*\*\* Reconvened: 7:59pm \*\*\***

- **Chairman Risi reconvened the meeting, and called for committee reports to be heard prior to the District Manager and Chairman's reports.**
- 2. Committee Reports**
- **Access and Disability: No Report.**
  - **Airport: No Report.**
  - **Capital/Expense & Budget/Planning:**
    - **Committee Chair Norma Nieves-Blas announced that the Capital (40 items) and Expense (23 items) FY-2018 budgets had been submitted in a timely fashion to the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and City Planning. The Chair also thanked District Manager Florence Koulouris for her work on the matter. Ms. Nieves-Blas stated that the budget would next go to the Borough President's Office. Following this step, the Board should hear back with a status update via the electronic system.**
    - **Chairman Risi thanked the Chair, and asked when discussion for FY19 begins, that chairs for committees begin meeting early to develop a budget in advanced.**
  - **Community & Economic Development: No Report.**
  - **Consumer Affairs: No Report.**
  - **Education/Library: No Report.**
  - **Environmental Protection: No Report.**
  - **Health/Senior Services: No Report.**
  - **Housing: No Report.**
  - **Land Use & Zoning:**
    - **Committee Chair Elizabeth Erion indicated that as the committee had not received any applications over the last month, they had begun the process of strategic planning for the community (i.e. reviewing areas within the district not rezoned since 1961 and discussing the future of the community). Ms. Erion stated that the Committee would come to the Board in future months with a status update.**
  - **Legal, Legislative & Parliamentary: No Report.**
  - **Office Staff: No Report.**
  - **Parks/Recreation & Cultural Services:**
    - **Committee Chair Richard Khuzami announced that the Committee had met during the breakout session, and the Committee supported sending a letter of recommendation in favor of the Dutch Kills Playground and Comfort Station renovation as presented (MOTION).**
    - **Motion seconded by [Inaudible].**
    - **Motion passed by a show of hands.**

- The Chair then discussed a recent meeting where strategies to permit for the future coexistence of kayakers and the new ferry line being added in Halletts Cove were discussed/brainstormed, and indicated that he does not want to see a loss of recreational use in the cove.
  - **Public Relations:** No Report.
  - **Public Safety:**
    - Committee Chair Antonio Meloni shared about two upcoming meetings related to public safety. The first is an upcoming meeting of the Astoria Civic Association at Riccardo's on December 6<sup>th</sup> (7pm-8pm) at which the new police commissioner will be speaking. The second was a meeting held on Tuesday November 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6pm to 7:15 at which plans for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hell Gate Bridge were to be discussed.
  - **Street Festivals/Special Events:**
    - Committee Chair Ann Bruno announced that calls to the Mayor's Office regarding the new proposed Street Festival rules (including a call in letter form issued last month by Community Board 1) had been successful; the proposed rules had been recalled for the year 2017.
  - **Transportation:**
    - Committee Chair Robert Piazza spoke regarding the recent Economic Development Corporation's BQX [Streetcar] meeting, and indicated while there were several ideas being proposed, no concrete plans were available at the time.
  - **Youth Services:**
    - Committee Chair Jose Batista discussed the Work Learn and Grow program (through HANAC Youth Services) which is running through April, in which businesses and non-profits can hire young adults to work several hours a week while being paid by the city.
- 3. District Manager's Report – Florence Koulouris:**
- District Manager Florence Koulouris announced that the District Office has utilized the Work Learn Grow program to hire a college student to work in the office until April. Ms. Koulouris stated that the office had worked closely with Ms. Norma Nieves-Blas to release the FY-18 budgets, and reviewed the low level of quality of life complaints received by the office during the month and a reduction in crime. The District Manager then highlighted that the new NCOs have been stopping by the office, and reviewed the multitude of meetings and events attended throughout the last month. Ms. Koulouris also noted a schedule for the new W and changes in the N, Q, and R subway lines was included in Board Members' folders and wished Board Members a Happy Holiday season.
- 4. New/Old Business**
- Chairman Risi called for new/old business to be discussed.
  - **New Business:**
    - Frances Luhmann-McDonald announced that holiday lights had been hung on Ditmars Blvd., 31<sup>st</sup> Street, and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, thanks to herself, local merchants and Mr. Alexiou.
    - George Alexiou announced a free Thanksgiving lunch being offered by the Greek-American Homeowners Association, which is open to all. A flier was included in Board Members' folders.
    - Rod Townsend stated that while many polling sites held elections on November 8<sup>th</sup> without a problem, PS 85 (The Judge Charles J. Vallone School) encountered long

lines. Mr. Townsend asked if something could be done in the future to reduce or prevent the problem.

- Thomas Ryan announced the Northern Woodside Coalition would be hosting a tree lighting on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 6pm (a flier was including in Board Members' folders), and that the holiday lights on Broadway would include "Welcome to [*Neighborhood*]" (e.g. "Welcome to Astoria", "Welcome to Woodside") thanks to the local councilmembers.

- **Old Business:** No requests to discuss old business were heard.

**5. Chairman's Report- Joseph Risi:**

- Chairman Joseph Risi wished Board Members and attendees a Happy Thanksgiving, and encouraged people to attend the December 20<sup>th</sup> Full Board meeting, and for Board Members to attend the holiday party.

**6. Adjournment:**

- Chairman Risi called for a motion to adjourn.
- **Motion made by Edward Babor.**
- **Motion seconded by George Alexiou.**
- **MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:15pm.**



COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens

DATE 11/15/16

1-Aug							
Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
Rose Anne Alafogiannis	✓		E	Jerry Kril	✓		
George Alexiou	✓			Melanie La Rocca	✓		
Daniel Aliberti	✓			Frances Luhmann-McDonald	✓		
Joan Asselin	✓			Antonio Meloni	✓		
Edward Babor	✓			Prabir Mitra			E
Jose Batista	✓			Kevin Mullarkey			E
Ann Bruno	✓			Stella Nicolaou	✓		
Edwin Cadiz	✓			Norma Nieves-Blas	✓		
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Mary O'Hara	✓		
John Carusone			E	Robert Piazza	✓		
Jean Marie D'Allea			E	RoseMarie Poveromo	✓		
Joanna D'Elia			E	Gus Prentzas		✓	
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			Joseph Risi	✓		
Katie Ellman	✓		E	Yawne Robinson	✓		
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓		
Mackenzi Farquer	✓			Rodolfo Sarchese	✓		
Dean Feratovic			E	Nancy Silverman			E
Evie Hantzopoulos			E	Dominic Stiller	✓		
Amy Hau	✓			Danielle Tharrington			E
Pauline Jannelli	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		
Vanessa Jones-Hall	✓			Rod Townsend	✓		
John Katsanos			E	Judy Trilivas	✓		
Richard Khuzami	✓						
Nancy Konipol	✓						
<b>Number Board Members Present</b> <u>33</u>							
<b>Present</b> <u>33</u> <b>Absent</b> <u>1</u> <b>Excused</b> <u>12</u>							